

U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)

PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION “HOT ISSUES” INFORMATION PAPER

SUBJECT: *Acquisition Gateway*

1. **BACKGROUND:**

a. General Background:

- The Acquisition Gateway **provides acquisition professionals with tools** and digital services **for use throughout the acquisition lifecycle**. The Gateway is improving federal acquisition by simplifying the currently complicated maze of regulations, policy and practices under which the workforce operates.
- The Gateway is **closely linked to the category management initiative** and is the channel to operationalize the strategies of category management into clearly defined actions and information for the acquisition workforce to use. Category management is an approach the federal government is applying to buy smarter and more like a single enterprise, which enables the government to eliminate redundancies, increase efficiency, and deliver more value and savings from its acquisition programs. Category management involves identifying core areas of spend, developing heightened levels of expertise, leveraging shared best practices, providing streamlined solutions for acquisition, and managing supply and demand.
- In conjunction with the adoption of category management as an acquisition strategy, the Executive Branch **charter for the Gateway is to eliminate siloed buying activities** as outlined in the December 4, 2014 [OMB Memo](#) “Transforming the Marketplace: Simplifying Federal Procurement to Improve Performance, Drive Innovation and Increase Savings.”
- As of September 2016, the Gateway has **over 10,000 government users**. The public content on the Gateway has received 15,000 visits since February 2016.
- The Gateway adoption is part of the **Cross-Agency Priority (CAP) goals** to achieve adoption of **15,000 unique government users in FY17**.
- GSA began the Acquisition Gateway as the **anchor of the Common Acquisition Platform**-a technology-enabled, shared-services IT strategy that will support customers through every step of the full acquisition process.
- By applying user-centered design and Agile practices to encourage success-generating behaviors, the Gateway is reinventing the way that we improve outcomes for IT projects. **Agile development** of the Acquisition Gateway will allow GSA to involve all **end-users in a transparent and collaborative development process**. Success requires constant collaboration and a continuous process of incorporating user feedback, including customer-contributed expertise and content.

b. Issues:

- GSA needs to have **partners across the government to find the right data and information**. The Acquisition Gateway brings together the acquisition

workforce into a single online location and community and gives them access to digital services, data, information. Content is generated by the category teams, agencies, and the acquisition workforce. Continuing to build the content and data is a critical success factor for the Gateway. This alignment is necessary for the success and ensuring the right information and data reach the acquisition workforce.

- FAS has identified the Acquisition Gateway as its preferred customer portal to have all new acquisition tools and information be accessible through the Gateway. Continuing the IT governance and building tools and access through the Gateway will give a single point of entry for the government-wide acquisition workforce.
- Tools and data need to be both aligned with the category management teams and provided by the category management teams.
- The **adoption needs to be thoughtfully managed** to ensure the users are voluntarily joining and collaborating on the Gateway. Success requires that the Gateway offer the tools and resources that support improved acquisition **and** that the Gateway be widely adopted and embraced by the user community.
- **Certain data/content** on the Gateway (such as and not limited to historical pricing, master contract information) requires **secure two-factor authentication**. The only government-wide system that offers this type of authentication is via OMB MAX. The limitation of OMB MAX is the self-selection by the user as to whether they are a government or contractor employee which raises business risks for sensitive data.
- The Gateway seeks ways to link the information on the tool to the benefits such as savings, increased speed in acquisition, and mission value to agencies. Developing and tracking these metrics is a FY17 goal.

2. SCOPE AND EFFECT:

a. Benefits for Citizens and Taxpayers:

- The Acquisition Gateway enables federal government buyers from all agencies to act as a single enterprise. Acting as one means that government acquires the same products and services for fewer tax dollars. Data transparency and decision-support tools enable **smart spending** and **improved requirements**, leading to **better outcomes**.
- By driving all federal buying behavior through the Acquisition Gateway and sharing data, tools, and expertise, government can deliver more effective and efficient procurements and achieve better results for taxpayers.
- The Acquisition Gateway is a neutral environment, free from agency, contract solution, and program bias. It will provide procurement professionals across government with advice and information that gets the best results for taxpayers.
- Category management relies on **sharing and transparency to reduce redundancy** and the proliferation of contract vehicles, as well delivering actionable data from all corners of government.
- The success of the Acquisition Gateway hinges on increased access to government-wide transaction data. Federal agencies can use this information to understand their own buying behavior and negotiate better contracts that include

government-wide requirements.

b. Benefits for GSA's Customers in the Federal Government:

- The acquisition workforce uses the Gateway to be more effective in their jobs through **access to the market research, best practices, communities, and data**.
- Increased effectiveness of acquisition **reduces incidental costs**—fewer protests, IG or GAO interventions—and **increases confidence and competence in the workforce**. For example, NITCP conducted the acquisition on USCENTCOM's behalf. A limited competition procurement using the national security justification was used for this requirement. The Contracting Officer used the Acquisition Gateway to research solutions. Other potential solutions discovered via the Acquisition Gateway were reviewed and evaluated. However, the market research on the other contracting vehicles revealed that the cost would be 10% over the Independent Government Cost Estimate (IGCE). USCENTCOM determined the FAS solution, open market, to be the best value for the government. To streamline the award, the Contracting Officer used Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) part 13.5 - Simplified Procedures for Certain Commercial Items. This process saved the client time, money and allowed an expedited award.

c. Impact on Industry

- The **forecast of contracting opportunities allows small businesses to search and filter through data to easily identify procurements set aside** for them to compete for across seven agencies (Dept. of State, Treasury, Education, GSA, Housing and Urban Development, the Social Security Administration, and the U.S. Agency for International Development).
- Tools are under development in FY17 to increase industry's access to the Gateway and allow greater engagement between industry and government using the Gateway as a platform.

3. ACTION(S) PLANNED OR REQUIRED:

- During FY17, the Gateway Division plans to develop and publish **new or upgraded services**, including: an acquisition document and template library that puts best-in-class examples at the fingertips of the entire workforce; new tools that allow industry greater participation in the Gateway; and a powerful integration toolkit that allows category teams and other users of the Gateway to develop specialized or vertical tools around their areas of expertise.
- During the year, the Division will be recruiting and supporting that new community of developers to use the Gateway as a development platform. This outreach includes 18F and category teams to build tools and apps to create a single point of entry to acquisition expertise. Successful execution of the integration strategy requires continued support of the Gateway consulting

function.

- The Stakeholder Management Division will extend the agency-centric strategy adopted in FY16. The team will **work with identified agencies to expand their use of the Gateway and understand how to apply to Gateway tools to meet the specific agency needs**. Under this strategy, the team leverages product champions in agencies to build a core group of adopters who become the early majority in the adoption curve.
- FAS has data driven initiatives underway that are discussed in detail through other issues papers such as Transactional Data Repository (TDR). The Gateway will be the access point for FAS customers to access this data, as part of the enterprise architecture plan using the Gateway as the customer portal.

4. KEY STAKEHOLDER INTEREST:

- The **Office of Management and Budget, Office of Federal Procurement Policy** has been a key partner on the Gateway. The Acquisition Gateway is cited in OMB memos for laptop/desktop, mobility strategy, and software.
 - The ten **governmentwide category executives and teams** rely on the Acquisition Gateway to connect their strategies and information to the acquisition workforce across the government.
 - The government-wide **acquisition workforce** is able to find information and digital services on the Gateway unavailable through other channels.
 - The Acquisition Gateway brings **Industry** insights, information, and data as to the strategic direction of the government's category management initiative.

5. FISCAL YEAR 2017/2018 BUDGET IMPACT:

The Gateway has a FY17 budget of \$12M for IT development through contractor developers. Expenses associated with the Acquisition Gateway are funded through the Acquisition Services Fund (ASF). The team is comprised of 13 FTE. The Gateway has received this funding and have been granted on the basis that 1) this will increase spend under management and reduce contract duplication, and 2) the resulting increases in FAS business volume will generate ASF revenues that more than make up for the expenditures.